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Reagan Getting A Soviet Expert As New Adviser

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WASHINGTON, June 4 — President Reagan has decided to name Jack F. Matlock, currently Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, as his senior specialist on Soviet affairs, White House officials have disclosed.

Mr. Matlock, a 53-year-old diplomat and former instructor in Russian at Dartmouth College, served as deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires of the United States Embassy in Moscow before taking over his Prague post in July 1981. He has served three tours in Moscow totaling seven years.

Need for Experienced Expert

In Moscow today, the Soviet Union announced that it had ordered Louis C. Thomas, an attaché at the United States Embassy, expelled for spying. A news item distributed by the Tass press agency said the diplomat had been "caught red-handed during a spy action in Moscow." [Page 14.]

With changes being made in the American proposals on strategic arms reduction and new diplomatic probing under way on other issues such as grain trade, possible consular and cultural agreements, and regional disputes over Poland, Afghanistan and Central America, William P. Clark, the President's national security adviser, was reported to have felt the need for an aide highly experienced in Soviet affairs.

Members of Congress and academic specialists have said that the Reagan Administration is handicapped in its dealings with Moscow by the lack of high-level Soviet specialists.

In contrast to previous administrations, where national security advisers like Henry A. Kissinger and Zbigniew

Brzezinski had broad experience in Soviet affairs, Mr. Clark has no such experience. Nor do Secretary of State George P. Shultz or Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger.

As the Administration moves into more intensive diplomacy with Moscow on arms control, and even considers a meeting between President Reagan and the Soviet leader, Yuri V. Andropov, White House officials have felt the need for more expertise close to the President.

They said Mr. Matlock, who has already conferred with Mr. Clark several times, will begin working full time in September on the staff of the National Security Council headed by Mr. Clark.

For the first two years of the Reagan Administration, the ranking Soviet specialist was Richard E. Pipes, a historian of 19th-century Russia who became involved in national security debates in the late 1970's, serving at one point on a panel of specialists that challenged official intelligence estimates of the Soviet military buildup.

Professor Pipes returned to Harvard early this year, leaving responsibility for Soviet and East European affairs on the national security staff in the hands of two junior specialists, John Lenczowski and Paula Dobriansky. Both have studied and written about those regions in universities without having served in diplomatic posts in Moscow or Eastern Europe. Mr. Lenczowski is 32 years old and Miss Dobriansky is 27.

White House officials, stressing that there was no dissatisfaction with either one, said the President and Mr. Clark felt the need for a specialist with diverse and extensive diplomatic and policy experience.

Mr. Matlock, who joined the Foreign

Service in 1966, has served in Ghana, Tanzania and Austria as well as Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. He speaks Russian, Czech, French, German and Swahili.

He is one of the State Department's ranking specialists in Soviet affairs. In addition to tours in Moscow from 1961 to 1963, 1974 to 1978, and in 1980-81, he has served as the State Department's country director for Soviet affairs. He has also been deputy director of the Foreign Service Institute.